

SPRINGSTIMES

Your Sandy Springs News Source



Greetings!

Water issues, both in terms of water out of our faucets, as well as that which produces runoffs after a storm, are on the front burners at City Hall. As to the daily water supply, the most crucial public service of all, the City of Sandy Springs has undertaken a comprehensive study of the water infrastructure that serves us. It is the City of Atlanta, of course, that supplies Sandy Springs' water. We have engaged an engineering firm to provide us with the technical answers to many questions.

What is the condition of the water mains underground in Sandy Springs? What maintenance has been done to these mains, if any, by Atlanta to safeguard the operation of this system? What other supplies, besides Atlanta, might be available to Sandy Springs? What would be the costs versus benefits of alternate suppliers?

Several issues have led the City of Sandy Springs to obtain the above data. First, the residents of this City continue to pay a 21 percent additional amount to Atlanta, over the price Atlantans pay, for every gallon of water. We estimate that annually this penalty costs the residents of Sandy Springs more than \$3.4 million. This does not include non-residential accounts.

Secondly, we have experienced repeated water line breaks, and need to know what the condition is of the pipes that serve us. Countless complaints and incorrect billings are received from our residents regarding leaks on the Atlanta system. Finally, we are very much aware that Atlanta is using our water revenues to help pay off their massive sewer/water bond issues. Unfortunately, the proceeds of these bond issues are not going into the upkeep of our pipes.

These might be labeled "short term" water problems. Of course, together with the entire metropolitan area, we face the "long run" issue of a sufficient water supply to sustain our life and growth. The long term solutions are being addressed at regional and state levels, but Sandy Springs has a role to play, too. We are considering what measures the City might enact to enhance water conservation.

We turn now to the other water issue: stormwater runoff. The stormwater drainage pipes installed by the County and developers many years ago are breaking. One result is sinkholes in our neighborhoods. Another problem is silting of our waterways and ponds. Finally, the issue is the contamination of the Chattahoochee River, which is the end receiver of polluted runoff from our streets and parking lots. Ever stricter state and federal mandates require the local government to correct the problems.

Therefore, the City of Sandy Springs has allotted \$200,000 for a Phase I analysis of our situation. How bad is our stormwater drainage problem? How much will it take to fix it? A citizen committee has been appointed to assist the engineering firm and to help guide us to an eventual solution of this problem. Other jurisdictions who have addressed stormwater drainage have resulted in a new "stormwater utility," which is funded by fees on properties, relative to the amount of paved surface that produces runoff.

Obviously, these water related issues are major. First, we need solid data, and then, together with our residents, the City Council will address the solutions.

Mayor Eva Galambos, PhD
City of Sandy Springs



What is Stormwater and Why Be Concerned?

Stormwater is the flow of water that results from precipitation and which occurs immediately following rainfall or as a result of snowmelt.

When rain occurs, several things may happen. Some may filter into the soil, some may be consumed by plants and some may be evaporated into the atmosphere. Stormwater is the rest of the precipitation that runs off land surfaces and impervious areas.

Stormwater discharges are generated by precipitation and runoff from land, pavements, building rooftops and other surfaces. Hard or impervious surfaces do not allow rainfall to filter into the soil, so rainfall becomes stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff accumulates pollutants such as oil and grease, chemicals, nutrients, metals and

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Giant in Breast Cancer Fundraising Wins MLK Honor



Mayor Eva Galambos (r) presented the Second Annual Humanitarian Award to resident Randi Passoff for her efforts on raising funds and awareness for breast cancer research.

Sandy Springs resident, Randi Passoff, was named the 2008 recipient of the Humanitarian Award on January 21st at the City's Third Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration. This is the second time the City has given the award that embodies the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and recognizes an individual for his or her humanitarian contributions to society and philanthropic work.

"I was so excited to receive the Humanitarian Award from the City of Sandy Springs. Being a native Atlantan and a resident of Sandy Springs, it is truly an honor to be recognized in this way," said Passoff. "I was also honored to be recognized on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, as Dr. King inspired so many people with his

message of hope and peace. I am proud to be a Sandy Springs resident and to be recognized with this award by this great city."

Ms. Passoff is the founder and executive director of "It's The Journey" and the Atlanta 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer. Through "It's The Journey" and the Atlanta 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer, Passoff works to ensure that all women, regardless of race, color or income, have access to top-quality breast cancer diagnosis, treatment, education and support programs. Her organization touches women of all walks of life—African-American, Latina, Asian, young and low-income. The organization has provided funding for organizations that reach thousands of women through education, support and research programs.

The event also featured choral tributes, guest choirs and guest of honor and keynote speaker, Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond. Under Thurmond's leadership, the Labor Department has undergone a significant transformation in customer service and efficiency. Unemployment offices have been transformed into state-of-the-art career centers focused on getting jobless Georgians back to work as quickly as possible. The success of Thurmond's approach is reflected in Georgia's number one national ranking in helping the unemployed get back to work.

"This was a wonderful day to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King," said Mayor Eva Galambos. "What better way to do so, with someone who works effortlessly to battle a dreaded disease that claims the lives of the innocent and also with someone who battles the effects of joblessness in our state. What perfect role models."

A volunteer committee made the selection from a group of three finalists, who also included Ines Silva and Bruce Weiner. Each year, Sandy Springs will present the award to a living resident whose stature, character, volunteerism and humanitarian work inspires the community.



The City's new open public meeting forum allowed for one-on-one time with residents on priority issues.

Open Format for Added Convenience

Sandy Springs represents a new way of providing municipal services and has set out to be an open and responsive government, with customer service as a top priority. With this mindset, the City decided to launch a new format of public meetings for the convenience of the residents and the business community.

The first of a new series of monthly open houses kicked off on February 11th at City Hall, with about 40 residents dropping by between the scheduled hours of 5 and 7:30 p.m. Stations were set up throughout Council Chambers and in adjacent rooms to allow for residents to visit with representatives from the Sandy Springs Police, Fire, Public Works and Recreation Departments. Crime statistics across the City were reviewed and input was received on the potential Roswell Road streetscape from Johnson Ferry to Abernathy Road.

Open house meetings will take place on the second Monday of each month. All future meeting dates and locations are listed on the City calendar at www.sandyspringsga.org. While some future meetings will take place at City Hall, others are scheduled at central and southern locations to reduce travel time for attendees from other areas of the City. Topics will vary depending on timely issues.

If You Want to Help in an Emergency...We Need You

Have you ever felt as if there was something you could do in an emergency? If your answer is yes, we need you. The Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Department is enrolling volunteers to be trained for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The training will begin in early spring.

The CERT Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may have an impact on their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders have not arrived on the scene. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

“CERT members can be the first responders and they can sustain those efforts until the Fire Department arrives on the scene,” said Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Capt. Kareem Fannin, who will be heading the program. “These are individuals who are close by who will help and respond until we get there. It’s a 24- to 30-hour program that we can come into your business, civic, homeowner’s association, church or synagogue and teach.”

The State of Georgia, Office of the Governor, has awarded the City of Sandy Springs an \$8,000 grant funded from the Homeland Security Grant Program for its Citizen Corps Initiatives. The City will use the funding to begin its CERT program.

The grant will pay for the materials for participants, as well as for outreach materials for the community. Each person trained will receive an emergency response kit, CERT materials and outreach materials.

“Knowledge is power,” added Capt. Fannin. “You can never be too prepared in a crisis.”

If you or your organization would like to be trained in the CERT program, contact Capt. Kareem Fannin at 404-886-9310 or kareem.fannin@sandyspringsga.org.



Each participant who completes the CERT course will receive an emergency preparedness kit.



Clearly marked addresses can make a difference for public safety personnel in times of an emergency. Large numbers are one way to be effective.

Visible Addresses Make a Difference

For safety's sake, the City of Sandy Springs encourages you to have a clear and readable address. All businesses' and residents' addresses should be clearly marked and visible from the roadway. This is a positive and progressive way to ensure the new 911 and public safety personnel can identify the structure quickly and accurately. Some tips to consider: large and reflective numbers, using numbers rather than spelling the address and posting the numbers at the end of a long driveway.

Centralizing Traffic Control

In the next several months, Sandy Springs' Traffic Management Center (TMC) is set to become a reality. The notice to proceed, with the creation of this new center, was given by the Mayor and Council in February, in the spirit of making another improvement that will make everyday navigation of City streets a simpler, less stressful feat.



When the City's new Traffic Management Center comes online, staff will no longer have to go to each signal cabinet to synchronize signals.

What will the new TMC mean for the City? Great improvements in motorists' ability to navigate the City's roadways will be the major benefit. The City's current traffic signal cabinets and controllers don't have the capability to communicate with one another and can't automatically adjust to help keep traffic flowing. The new TMC will use the latest technology to allow for communication from City Hall to all intersections.

Thanks to a pending force account agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), 62 existing traffic signal cabinets and controllers will be replaced with the latest technology. The City will also be installing 53 pan-tilt-zoom (PZT) cameras that can be used to look at traffic incidents and to make approved traffic modifications as necessary. The real-time video will be accessible from the City's Web site much like the current GDOT Navigator site, so one may check the cameras before hitting the streets.

The TMC will be operational this summer, and by the end of the year, at least 75 percent of the City's 120 traffic signals will be controlled from City Hall.

Improving Pedestrian Access



Since construction kicked off in January on the Mt. Vernon Parkway Sidewalk and Traffic Calming Project, 4,700 feet of new curb, gutter and sidewalks have already been installed at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Parkway and Crest Valley Drive. This project, which significantly improves pedestrian safety by installing a sidewalk along the eastern length of Mt. Vernon Parkway, is scheduled for completion this spring.

The Mt. Vernon Parkway Sidewalk project is one of 30 ongoing Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) across the City. For a complete list of all CIP projects, visit www.sandyspringsga.org, click on "Public Works" and then click on "Capital Improvement Projects."

Contact Us

Sandy Springs Web site: www.sandyspringsga.org

Sandy Springs Citizen Response Center: 770.730.5600

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Stormwater

bacteria as it travels across these surfaces. Heavy precipitation or snowmelt can also cause sewer overflows that may contaminate water sources with untreated human and industrial waste, toxic materials and other debris.

Why be concerned about stormwater? Stormwater runoff has a serious impact on our environment. As development continues in Sandy Springs, the natural capacity of the soil and vegetation to infiltrate and take up rainfall decreases, and more rainfall becomes stormwater runoff. This can produce negative impacts by causing erosion of land areas and stream banks, by causing or increasing flooding and also by carrying pollutants to surface waters. When development increases, water has nowhere to go and may cause serious drainage, pollutant and sanitation problems.

Over the course of the next several months, the City will be looking at impervious surfaces, runoff, pollutants, impact to stream banks and erosion and sedimentation and how to best address these issues. The first step was to recently appoint a Stormwater Advisory Team or SAT who will work hand-in-hand with the City to address these and other issues relating to Stormwater. For more information on this topic, please visit www.sandyspringsga.org or call 770-730-5600.